

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 5, 2010

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1977

Introduced by Assembly Member Cook

February 17, 2010

An act relating to the Department of Industrial Relations to add Section 55.5 to the Labor Code, relating to employment.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1977, as amended, Cook. Department of Industrial Relations: ombudsman.

Existing law establishes the Department of Industrial Relations and charges that agency with, *among other things*, the responsibility for administering the state plan for the development and enforcement of occupational safety and health standards to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners of California, to improve their working conditions, and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment. The work of the department is divided into divisions, among which are the Divisions of Labor Standards Enforcement, Workers' Compensation, and Occupational Safety and Health.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation establishing an ombudsman within the department in order to facilitate the resolution of labor-law issues authorize the Director of Industrial Relations to appoint an Ombudsman for Small Business to be charged with providing information and assistance to small businesses in California that have difficulties in dealing with complex matters involving the Divisions of Labor Standards Enforcement, Workers' Compensation, and Occupational Safety and Health.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~ yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 *SECTION 1. Section 55.5 is added to the Labor Code, to read:*
2 *55.5. (a) The director may appoint an Ombudsman for Small*
3 *Business to be charged with providing information and assistance*
4 *to small businesses in California that have difficulties in dealing*
5 *with complex matters involving the Division of Labor Standards*
6 *Enforcement, the Division of Workers' Compensation, and the*
7 *Division of Occupational Safety and Health.*
8 *(b) The duties of the ombudsman shall include the following:*
9 *(1) Helping to disseminate information about upcoming*
10 *regulations and other pertinent matters to small businesses.*
11 *(2) Referring small businesses to the appropriate specialists in*
12 *state government and elsewhere for help with particular needs.*
13 *(3) Working with personnel of the department and divisions to*
14 *enhance their understanding of small businesses when they develop*
15 *and enforce workplace regulations.*
16 ~~SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact~~
17 ~~legislation establishing an ombudsman within the Department of~~
18 ~~Industrial Relations in order to facilitate the resolution of labor-law~~
19 ~~issues.~~